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Service

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WILDLIFE SERVICES—NEW HAMPSHIRE

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USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Hampshire

Every day, residents, industries, organizations, and agencies call on New Hampshire Wildlife Services (WS) for expertise in protecting agriculture, property, natural resources, and human health and safety from damage or threats posed by wildlife. Managed by professional wildlife biologists, WS responds with effective, selective and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts.

New Hampshire's landscape is a diverse mix of urban, suburban and rural environments with forests and agricultural lands hosting an equally wide array of wildlife. The work of New Hampshire WS reflects the State's diverse wildlife. WS cooperates with State and Federal officials, municipalities, industry and individuals to prevent game animal damage to fruit, row crops and livestock; protects property; guards natural resources from wildlife depredation; reduces wildlife hazards to aviation; protects people, pets, and livestock from wildlife-borne diseases; and educates the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management.



Specific projects conducted by New Hampshire WS include: mitigating bear-human interactions; protecting endangered piping plovers and Karner blue butterflies; conducting sampling and monitoring for rabies, chronic wasting disease (CWD) and avian influenza (AI); and managing damage caused by deer, waterfowl, gulls, starlings, and other wildlife.

Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS enables people to resolve wildlife conflicts by providing sound technical advice and the loan of damage management equipment and materials. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support these efforts, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop solutions to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure that WS and others benefit from the latest science and technology.

Bear Damage Management and Assistance—Protecting agriculture, human safety, and property through bear damage management is a major consideration. Black bear foraging activity impacts honey producers and other agricultural commodities. In cooperation with state agencies, WS' increased staff, stationed throughout the State, provided statewide coverage and timely

response, abatement and assessment capabilities. Threats to human safety as well as damage to apiaries, property, livestock, and agricultural commodities were addressed via site visits, harassment, fencing distributions, and trap-and-relocate activities. A toll-free Bear Information and Referral Service aided information transfer. In FY06 an expanded program assisted municipalities, campgrounds and restaurants experiencing bear conflicts and enabled the State to reduce the total of funds reimbursed to producers for bear damage due to damage abatement activities.

Reducing Deer Damage—In cooperation with the State, WS reduces deer and other wildlife damage to orchards, apiaries, truck gardens, horticultural commodities and livestock, which the National Agricultural Statistics Service estimates comprise over 65% of all farm marketing cash receipts in New Hampshire. WS mitigates wildlife damage to agriculture through the distribution of materials including: temporary and permanent electric fencing, repellents, pyrotechnics, site specific depredation permit issuance and participation on the NH Wildlife Damage Control Advisory Board. The program served over 400 cooperators experiencing game animal damage in FY 06.

Protecting Dairies and Feedlots—WS helps reduce European starling and blackbird damage at dairies and feedlots. The program, coordinated

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting agricultural commodities and property from bear and deer damage
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Protecting endangered species from habitat loss and predation
- Wildlife disease management and surveillance
- Managing damage caused by Canada geese, gulls and European starlings

Top 5 WS Research Projects of Interest to New Hampshire:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Managing public and animal health issues
- Defining and reducing agricultural losses to turkey, deer, and bear
- Improving Canada goose damage management methods
- Managing starling and pigeon conflicts at dairy and livestock operations

with the NH Division of Pesticide Control, combines technical assistance, recommendations for exclusion, modification of cultural practices, and population management activities.

Wildlife Disease Management—To prevent the northward spread of raccoon rabies, WS assisted State departments distribute over 30,000 baits containing oral rabies vaccine (ORV) for the fourth consecutive year. The ORV zone encompassed 204 mi² of the Upper Connecticut River Valley including the town of Lancaster. WS conducted raccoon sampling in the ORV zone to determine bait uptake, program effectiveness and rabies movements.

WS continued to assist with CWD monitoring in FY 06. The presence of CWD in the wild cervid populations would present significant challenges to wildlife agencies due to the impact on deer as well as perceptions regarding public health. WS' collection and sampling of deer heads from check stations and meat processors comprised 77% of all specimens submitted for testing in FY 06. State efforts are part of a nationwide program to detect CWD.

WS, in cooperation with State agencies, will collect live bird and environmental samples over a one-year period to test for highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. New Hampshire was the first of the lower 48 state to initiate wild bird monitoring.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports—Wildlife/aircraft strikes cost U.S. civil aviation over \$550 million annually and pose a safety hazard. WS is recognized for its scientific expertise in reducing wildlife hazards to the aviation industry nationally and in New Hampshire. The WS research arm, the National Wildlife Research Center, conducts research to develop methods to reduce hazards and maintains a national strike database used to monitor

trends and species of greatest concern to aviation. New Hampshire WS uses this research to assist seven airports in the State.

A 2003 turkey strike at Pease International Tradeport caused over \$3 million in damage. Subsequently, WS conducted integrated turkey and large bird harassment, removal and monitoring. No turkey strikes were recorded in FY 06. In a cooperative study, WS attached transmitters to 30 wild turkeys and monitoring will continue for two years to evaluate the population, movements and risks to air traffic.

WS conducted harassment, control and hazard assessments at the Lebanon Municipal Airport in conjunction with an integrated gull harassment program at a landfill less than 5,000 feet away. Gulls comprised only 5% of all birds observed at the airport with no gull strikes reported in FY 06. WS consulted with and trained airport personnel throughout the state and assisted in acquiring Federal and State permits that allow designated personnel to address bird and mammal hazards at these facilities.

Protecting Human Health and Safety From Canada Geese—An estimated 20,000 Canada geese reside in the State. Although people enjoy observing geese, conflicts often develop as feces accumulate, overgrazing damages landscaping, and aggressive geese attack humans. WS assists over 100 New Hampshire residents and businesses annually through technical recommendations, equipment distributions and local population reduction projects.

Protecting Endangered Karner Blue Butterflies and Piping Plovers—To enhance recovery of the Federally and State endangered butterfly, WS conducted woodchuck control activities to reduce foraging at two sites east of Concord. Wild lupine is essential for completion of the butterfly's life cycle. The small population of 50 Karners in 2000 has grown to over 1,500 in 2006.

WS installed temporary fencing to enhance nesting success of the Federally threatened and State endangered Piping plover at Hampton Beach State Park. Protective fencing enclosures reduced nest and chick loss to predators, minimized human disturbance and prevented beach erosion which has previously negatively impacted plover nesting success.

WS conducted on-going integrated gull harassment and monitoring projects at four separate landfills to reduce on- and off-site conflicts associated with large concentrations of birds attracted to the facilities. Woodchuck

control activities addressed burrowing activity and structural damage to an earthen dam operated by Trans Canada and reduced property loss at a Housing and Urban Development facility. WS addressed over 1,400 requests for assistance from the public in FY 06.

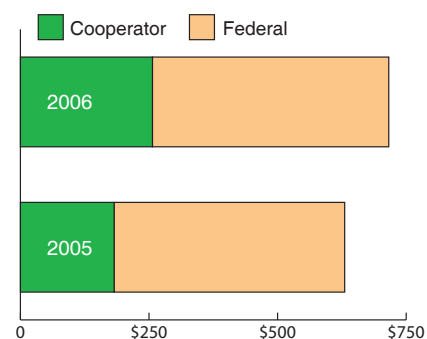
Looking to the Future

WS strives to provide citizens and visitors with safe, effective solutions to diverse wildlife conflicts. The growing population of resident Canada geese poses increasing challenges for the protection of human health and safety as well as property. WS continues work with dairy farmers to develop and implement more effective, integrated management strategies to reduce consumption and contamination of animal feed by starlings, turkeys and pigeons. Emerging public and animal health issues such as rabies, Lyme disease, salmonella, AI and CWD continues to challenge wildlife managers in New Hampshire. Education will remain central as an effective strategy for managing conflicts associated with bears and bird feeding activities.

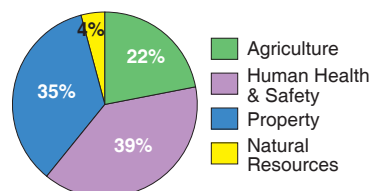
New Hampshire Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program: producers, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and local government agencies. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

Total Funding (Thousands)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



USDA is an equal employment provider and employer.

Major Cooperators

- New Hampshire Departments of Fish and Game, Agriculture, Health and, Environmental Services
- New Hampshire Farm Bureau Federation
- New Hampshire Cooperative Extension Service
- University of New Hampshire
- Pease International Tradeport; regional airports
- The cities of Nashua and Lebanon
- Waste Management of NH, Inc.
- Androscoggin Valley Regional Refuse Disposal District
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service